United Nations S/2016/357

Security Council

Distr.: General
20 April 2016

Original: English

Identical letters dated 19 April 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

As disclosed yesterday, Israel recently discovered a Hamas terror tunnel that originates in the Gaza Strip and extends dozens of metres into Israeli territory.

This subterranean passage was fortified with concrete and fully equipped with air, electrical and rail systems. As the use of these tunnels during Operation Protective Edge demonstrated, these tunnels have one purpose and one purpose only: to launch terror attacks against Israelis.

This terror tunnel was not built overnight. It was part of an ongoing, systematic operation to construct a network of underground passageways in order to infiltrate Israeli territory, an effort which has not ceased since the conclusion of Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

This discovery was not a surprise. Hamas leaders have openly declared their intentions to use all means to carry out deadly attacks against Israel. This past January, in a public event, Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas, announced:

> "In east Gaza, there are heroes digging tunnels under the ground and in the west, there are those testing rockets. The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades are digging tunnels to defend Gaza and turn it into a launch pad for all of Palestine."

In response to yesterday's announcement, the military wing of Hamas threatened that the unearthed tunnel was "only a drop in the ocean of what the resistance has prepared".

Time and time again, including in the recent Security Council debate on global terrorism, I have warned that Hamas is using the period of quiet to rearm and prepare for further conflict and is seizing material intended for civilian infrastructure to do so. While Israel has been cooperating with the international community to facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid and construction material into Gaza, Hamas has impeded the reconstruction to prepare terror attacks against the people of Israel.

Today, as Israeli men, women and children face the imminent threat of a surprise assault on their towns and communities, on their homes and schools, this Council is silent.

Please recycle

Ignoring these threatening activities of Hamas is harming both the Israelis and the Palestinians and the cause of peace.

I call on you to declare Hamas a terrorist organization and to demand that it be disarmed. I further call on you to demand that the Palestinian Authority reassume control over the Gaza Strip.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative